Option of pension to Public Sector Bank official

212. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a demand by Public Sector Bank officials for allowing them a chance for option for pension has been pending with Government;

(b) if so, when a decision has been taken to allow them the options;

(c) if so, when the same was taken and communicated to the staff; and

(d) if not, by when that is likely to be done?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) Representations have been made from time to time by the employees through Unions or otherwise demanding a chance for option for pension.

(b) to (d) It has been made clear to Workmen Unions/Officers Associations that the present pension schemes is not possible to be offered to the remaining employees, due to huge fmancial cost on the Public Sector Banks (PSBs). The demand for one more option for pension was also raised by the Workmen Unions/Officers Associations during the course of the 8th Bipartite Settlements. On this, Indian Banks' Association (IBA) reiterated its inability to extend the present pension scheme to those who had not opted for pension. Both the parties agreed to discuss alternative proposals. Since no alternative scheme was suggested by the Unions/ Associations. IBA prepared a Model Scheme on pension based on 'defmed contribution'. This was, however, not acceptable to the Workmen Unions/Officers Associations.

Agriculture Bank

213. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to create an exclusive bank and could be named Agriculture Bank to protect the interest of the farmers all oyer the country;

(b) if so, the response of Government thereto;

(c) whether it is a fact that banks like NABARD are reluctant to lend to some

sectors;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps being taken by Government to lend to each sector to improve the economy of the country within a specific time-frame?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) NABARD neither lends directly to the farmers nor has any proposal to lend directly to the farmers as it does not have the infrastructure and organizational set up to do so. However, NABARD provides refinance to institutions *viz.* Commercial Banks, Cooperative banks (both short term and long term structure). Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and scheduled Urban Cooperative Banks against their lending for investment credit, under farm and non farm activities including rural housing. The borrowing institutions provide financial assistance for a wide range of activities, *viz.* Minor Irrigation, Land Development, Watershed Development, Plantation and Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Rural Non Farm Sector, Rural Housing, Service Sector, Transport Self Help Groups, Agri-clinics and Agri Business Centres.

Besides, providing refinance for medium and long term loans, NABARD also provides refinance for Short Term Seasonal Agriculture Operations (ST-SAO) purposes (crop loans) as